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LARK WENT SINGING
AND OTHER POEMS

RUTH GUTHRIE HARDING



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**A LARK WENT SINGING
AND OTHER POEMS**

A LARK WENT SINGING AND OTHER POEMS

BY *(Thomson)*
RUTH GUTHRIE HARDING *Burton*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
RICHARD BURTON



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no. 1

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To Richard Burton

INTRODUCTION

THOSE who read American verse with an eye to quality, and recognize it in current writers, will not have been unmindful of the name of Ruth Guthrie Harding. A lyric now and then in the magazines, afterwards perhaps to be garnered in an anthology, will have arrested attention and imparted the pleasure that comes when the sense of poetry is quickened by a new claimant on the Muse.

Mrs. Harding's work is quite removed from the fashion of the hour: it utterly lacks strain and strut, it makes no bid for favor by the use of the grotesque, the super-subtle, the coarsely realistic or the stormily individualistic and protestant. It brings us back, contrar-

wise, in the simplest, most unobtrusive way, to that older yet ever-young appeal of Beauty which has a twin face, because it is both esthetic and spiritual. It is for this reason that the pieces printed in the following fascicle of poems, so slender in amount, so unassuming in tone, possess, it seems to me, the characteristics of genuine song: since they embody art, imagination, aspiration, and the gift of happy, singing words. Not afraid that the wings of flight shall be clipped by the restraint of law, such self-respecting work accepts the nobler traditions of the *ars poetica*, as if in consonance with Goethe's declaration that it is only within the strait confines of art that the artist finds his true freedom.

The gravamen of the charge that to do this means a slavish obedience of the past, and a consequent failure to represent the present, loses its weight in the answer that everything of value in art looks to the

past. In art, a personal hallmark set upon a general human experience; *voilà tout!* The old becomes the new again; or better, there is neither new nor old, but only the true, the good and the beautiful.

What has been called "the lyric cry" is markedly present in this volume of verse. It is small wonder that Mr. O'Brien in *The Boston Transcript* should refer to the "lyric magic" of this versewoman; indeed, there is in her writing at times a stroke of tone color, a lilt, a cadence, a turn of phrase which, one hardly knows how, unite chemically in effects which startle with their felicity. The rhythmic sense is strong and of varied accomplishment; the range is remarkable in this respect. Mark the emotional sequences, the retardations and resolutions of "Threnody":

How still a grave can be,
Wrapt in the tender starlight, far
from the moaning sea . . .

For never a road can take me be-
yond the wind and foam,
And never a road can reach him
who lies so far from home.

A wonderful gamut is run in
such a lyric.

In what contrast is the vernal
trochaic measure of "Returning":
There's a thrill of other spring-
times in the country soul of me!

And in an entirely different way,
listen to the leap of the mingled
anapests and dactyls of "Last Song
of Apollo":

To me she is sunlight and shadow,
star-sweetness and rain.

"Grotesque" is another rich ex-
ample of musical inventiveness; it
is no excess of language so to call it.
And once again, what a feeling for
marching time and the lure of jig
beats through the superb little
"Call to a Scot!"

"Delhi" is yet another poem
where the freedom of handling

suggests mastery: that artistic irregularity of metre which is so superior to the customary jog trot of conventional verse. Such achievements, the gentle triumphs of poetic art which are likely to be noted by the few if at all, remind us that in all poetry that is truly such, movement must be the close-fitting garment of mood and meaning.

Nor can the emotional value of the work, with music as one of its by products, be overlooked by any poetry lover. Mrs. Harding's testament of song quivers with a feeling that gives it intensity and tonal texture. It has in it a kind of psychic tremble. But this is held in leash of art, restrained by taste; there is nothing in it of the unregulated sentiment which passes over into sentimentality; it recognizes instinctively that in reserve is a citadel of strength. There is a shy, Celtic wistfulness, an impulse of withdrawal in this expression of

the deeper things; delicacy and indirection are like diaphanous veils that enhance the loveliness within.

Again and again in this fragrant little collection is sounded a lovely spiritual note; well illustrated in the several mother poems, with their uplifted adoration that is yet earth-warm and human:

We mothers with our stain of earth,
Marring the sanctity of birth.

How inevitably said that is and how it rings deep changes on the motif of motherhood, summing up in its simple way the whole mighty saga of woman! Nor is the throb in the message without mystic touches that suggest, to me for one, a fellowship with A. E., W. B. Yeats, and Housman of "Shropshire Lad" fame. It occurs in "To an Ambrotype," and is recurrent in "Etching after Daubigny," "The Wind on the Hilltop," "The Gypsy Stars are Camped," and "When I am Dead."

There is much profit in this, since it makes for atmosphere, evocation and overtones which do not so much define as suggest, hinting with half lights rather than stating facts at high noon. Such song is above all connotative. And it is this quality that gives a haunting potency to the love motives in the book; "Sanctuary," "In a forgotten Burying-ground," "Argenteuil," "Surrender," to mention but a few.

Yet this tendency in Mrs. Harding's utterance might lead to over-tension and vagueness; undoubtedly a danger in the feeling for and rendering of these exquisite, elusive states of the subjective mind. But this is avoided because of another trait: breadth, sweep and vigor are secured by the warm vibration of her interest in humanity; a flower of social sympathy which roots in the good, red soil of reality. This social note is present, although it is less insistently

struck than with other of our younger singers; and seems for that very reason to escape the appearance of mannerism. One has only to read "At the Old Ladies' Home" and "Vignette" to see how true this is; and, in the homely folk vein "I See'd Ye Aince."

But what of the subject matter of such poetry, do you ask? What of its substance as well as its form and spirit? Surely, enough has been implied in enumerating the qualities it contains. In the light of them, the question of message is nugatory; where are charm, distinction, personality, it is sufficient; Beauty being its own best excuse. But if answer one must, let it be said that this verse is about the old, simple, dewy-fresh, eternal things; about love and loss, sorrow and truth, tender joy in the call and consolation of Nature, and faith in the divine that pulsates through the dust of day. In a sentence, it is about life and the ceasing from

life, here and hereafter, with all its hope and heartbreak. Life is seized at the center, warmed by the emotions, made high with spiritual meanings, and then shaped for our pleasure because it comes to us by way of music and imagination.

To the present critic it would appear worth while to bring us poetry which does thus transmute the individual experience into the experience of all: since all partake of these elemental pains and privileges of living. And especially is this so now, when bards do not lack who can be relied upon to mouth and posture and find great joy in motives like the steam Calliope and the shambles on a hot day. The "one, clear call" of the song speech in the following pages is of another sort; a sort that is welcome at a time when vagaries are vainglorious and the honk of the automobile drowns out the still small voice that is even now flute-clear and flute-sweet, if we will but heed. Song

of this other sort is modern because it is human, and the human knows no date; it savors of the old only because the old is human too; it is poetry of the future because it will be here in the final battle called Armegeddon and in the final peace which is Eden come again. Silly chatter about schools and forms and manners will make a little brief stir, a little din in our ears; but real Poetry will be ever about its business of stabbing us awake with Beauty and making the good, lovely. For of such is the very kingdom of song.

In this modest book, "A Lark Went Singing," there will be unfeigned delight for all who still desire Poetry, not for the exploitation of creed or mode or personality — but for its own sweet sake.

RICHARD BURTON

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IN A FORGOTTEN BURY- ING-GROUND

Eternal in the brooding of the old
Norwegian spruces

I hear the wistful tenderness of
loves They used to know,
And in the swelling wood-notes that
the eager springtide looses
Sobs again Their heart-break
from the Springs of Long
Ago:

And sometime, through the si-
lence, with the April shad-
ows lying

Aslant the solemn acre where I
take my dreamless rest,
Perhaps the stifled need of You
my heart was ever crying
Will find its way across the years
— to stir a stranger's breast!

THRENODY

There's a grass-grown road from
the valley—

A winding road and steep—

That leads to the quiet hill-top,
where lies your love asleep. . .

*While mine is lying, God knows
where, a hundred fathoms deep.*

I saw you kneel at a grave-side—

How still a grave can be,

Wrapt in the tender starlight, far
from the moaning sea!

*But through all dreams and star-
light, the breakers call to me.*

Oh, steep is your way to Silence—

But steeper the ways I roam,

For never a road can take me be-
yond the wind and foam,

*And never a road can reach him
who lies so far from home.*

A MECCA RUG

Worn old carpet with colors rare,
Didst think it sacrilege
That late tonight in the shadows
there

One held me close and kissed my
hair?

A breath that stirred in the languid
air

Rose from thy faded edge.

A chant from the mosque by the
inland sea

Was heavy in my ears:

There came some dusky memory. . .

When I was I in Araby,

Long, long ago I fashioned thee,

Scroll of a Thousand Years.

A temple-rug, with the niche for
prayer

That my lord's dark knees oft
pressed:

The shield, the comb, and the cres-
cent there

Are symbols his tribe was wont to
wear;

Mine the weaving?—Then mine
the prayer . . .

May Allah guard his rest!

A chant from the mosque by the
inland sea,

And the smart of forgotten tears.

Dost know what tonight's new love
may be?

Perchance it will all be clear to me
When I shall be I in Araby

At the end of a thousand years!

RETURNING

Never sings a city-robin on the
gray-stone window-ledges
But I dream the long, cool mead-
ows where the yellow cowslips
be;

To his call I guess an answer from
the grass and tangled hedges—
There's a thrill of other spring-
times in the country soul of
me!

Never falls light rain above me but
I hear its gentle patter
On a lonely roof at even, as I
heard it years ago;

Through the music, warmth, and
fragrance, past the sound of
careless chatter,

Throbs the silence of far places
where the pines and birches
grow.

I shall see a few more spring-times,
then shall heed no answer lilt-
ed

To that first full-throated robin,
hear no rain above my head. . .
Give me, God, the meadow-blos-
soms when my formal wreaths
have wilted —

Let me lie till Thine Own
Springtime with the pines be-
side my bed!

“THE MADONNA OF THE CARPENTER-SHOP”

(Dagnan-Bouveret)

O Mary, in thy clear young eyes
What sorrow came at His first
cry?

What hint of how He was to die
Disturbed thee in the calm sun-
rise. . .

What shadow from the paling sky
Did fall across thy Paradise?

Dream'st thou the Garden, and the
Tree?

Knew they were for the little
child

Whose lips against thy warm
breast smiled?

So sweet, that body close to thee,
By men's rough hands to be defiled;
So frail . . . yet waiting Calvary!

Ah, once I too lay spent and wan,
A tiny head against my heart,
And had my vision of the part
A child must play when years had
gone —

And then I felt the quick tears
start,
Remembering Jesus in the dawn.

O Mary, mother without guile,
We mothers with the stain of
earth

Marring the sanctity of birth,
See heaven in thy baby's smile,
And, sinning, know the holy
worth

Of what thou, sinless, dream'st
that while.

TO AN AMBROTYPE

From out thy Silence, wilt thou
 hearken here
And let me feel thy touch upon
 my brow?
More than pale drifting dust art
 to me now,
Woman I never knew, gone many
 a year. . .

And more than fleeting dream my
 face must be,
Where thou art lying in thy
 quiet bed;
Because I too would pillow his
 tired head—
I too have prayed . . . and would
 keep faith with thee.

Thou who didst make him, see, the
 light is dim
Across the doubtful path we two
 have trod:

Yet would I trust thee, face to
face with God,
To ask, "*Without her, were it well
with him?*"

For, when at last I shall be com-
forted
Within the Dark that long hath
covered thee,
And God shall pass, thou wilt re-
member me
As one who loved thee well though
thou wert dead.

LAST SONG OF APOLLO

Today I have fled from the Mountain;
and never again

As a god shall I roam by the fountain
or sing in the glen.

The new gods be mute, if they
heard me; nor glory nor fire

Hath leapt from my music and
stirred me, so broken my lyre.

I cried to Latona who bore me—
she answered me not:

Diana hath perished before me,
and dark is the spot

Where silent the laurel-maid
broodeth, forgiving but cold—

*O Clytië, once so forsaken, . . .
dost weep as of old?*

Green Daphne I left in the meadow,
unmoved of my pain.

To me she is sunlight and shadow,
star-sweetness and rain:

(But all through the years when I
loved her, who never loved me,
Such, then, was the pain my forgetting had meted to thee?)

I could not remember thee only,
with her at my side—

Yet I might have pitied thee lonely,
and made for thy pride

Brief kindness, to spare thee thy
sighing; or wreaths for thy
brow. . .

*O Clytië, Clytië, Clytië, where art
thou now?*

SONG FOR A STROLLER

Talents, you say, were lent for my
using,

“Thrown to the four winds, lost
in a day” —

A song on the highroad was more
my choosing,

And smell o' the pine-woods
along my way.

Friend I've none, nor sweetheart to
love me,

Roof nor fireside, books nor
kin —

Only the tall trees bending above
me. . .

A boy's clear dreams when the
stars shine in!

Sun and rain in the silent places. . .

What for me where my talents
lie?

Men might praise me, but in their
faces

I read unrest as I wander by;

Women might smile — but ah, I've
tasted

The rose-red dawn and the even-
ing mist!

What care I for a full cup wasted,
What care I for those lips un-
kissed?

Fame, good folk, had but proved a
tasking,

Love is a blessing hard to keep —
A road to follow is all I'm asking,
And, at the last, a long, long
sleep!

GROTESQUE

With the first light on the skyline
came the rapping of the sickles
And the brown arms of the reapers
bent to toil another morn;
Close beside me in the glimmer, in
the golden sweep and shimmer,

Knelt a reaper strange among us,
crooning through the ragged
corn:

“Born of sorrow,
Gone tomorrow —

Gone to lie in yonder valley where
their fathers long have lain;
Men who know not ship nor sa-
bre,
Each but drudges by his neigh-
bor,
And the fields wherein they labor
are a heritage of pain!”

Sleep was heavy on our eye-lids
when a lone star followed sunset,

But we missed the pale young
stranger, none knew whither
he had gone—

Then, from where the dead are lying,
with the night-wind's tender sighing

Rose and fell a last low cadence
of the voice we heard at dawn:

“Weary reapers,
Early sleepers—

Brief the glow that drifts across
them from the waning August
moon:

These that rest beyond its gleaming

Lie unvexed of drift or dreaming,

And the fields with harvest teeming
have forgot them all too
soon!”

SONG

FOR J. L. T.

O shadows past the candle-gleam,
so brief to pause in flight,
Are shadows that can come no more
Still moving unseen on the door
Of Yesternight?

O roses on the crumbling wall, so
soon to droop and die,
Are any roses that are dead
Still fragrant where their petals
bled
In Junes gone by?

O heart of mine, there is a face nor
grief nor prayer can bring. . .
Think you in some far Shadow-
land
One keeps my roses in his hand,
Remembering?

FROM A CAR-WINDOW

Pines, and a blur of lithe young
grasses;
Gold in a pool, from the western
glow;
Spread of wings where the last
thrush passes—
And thoughts of you as the sun
dips low.

Quiet lane, and an irised mead-
ow. . .

*(How many summers have died
since then?)*

I wish you knew how the deepen-
ing shadow
Lies on the blue and green
again!

Dusk, and the curve of field and
hollow

Etched in gray when a star ap-
pears:

Sunset, . . . twilight, . . . and dark
to follow, . . .

And thoughts of you through a
mist of tears.

THE CALL TO A SCOT

There came an ancient man and
slow

Who piped his way along our
street—

How could the neighbors' children
know

That to her ears 'twas passing
sweet?

With smiles they spoke the ragged
kilt,

And jeered the pipes, in mirth-
ful file;

But, strangely moved, she heard
the lilt

That rallied Carrick and Argyle.

A stroller, playing in the street,
Half-hearted, weary, out of
place—

But his old measure stirred her feet,
My baby with the Gaelic face:

She squared her shoulders as she
stood

To watch the piper 'round the
turn—

Nor dreamed what beat within her
blood

Was Robert Bruce and Ban-
nockburn!

ETCHING AFTER DAU- BIGNY

Hushed is the note of the night-
bird's cry

On moorlands where lengthen-
ing shadows pass;

Cold is the reach of the dull gray
sky

That borders the waste where the
spent winds die

In fringes of rusty grass.

None but light fingers of ghosts
have swept

The tangles apart for a vision of
sea;

Even the echoes have long-while
slept,

And only the lizard his watch has
kept,

Aglint in a vine-hung tree.

Changeless that solitude: time and
stress

Mark never the places by men
untrod:

Hidden the meanings of vast im-
press

Engraved on these pages of lone-
liness . . .

Dim lines from the Scroll of
God.

OF A YOUTH PASSING

Out of half-remembering, the pa-
gan gods designed him,
And meant to use a setting that
they saved from Arcady;
But all the sunny dream-slopes, the
fields and silver forests
Are hidden from the visioning
of mortals, all but me.

To mirror stars, they made his eyes
like mystic pools at even,
But gave him not the poet's
heart he had when time be-
gan;
They tuned his voice to reed-notes
beloved of boyish shepherds,
Yet waked in him no echoes of
the melodies of Pan.

Sometimes, across the sunset-glow,
I see him turning homeward,
A dark and lonely figure in the
sombre city street;

He does not guess a goat-skin
should hang about his shoulder,
der,

Nor miss those frisky little lambs
that gamboled at his feet!

Out of half-remembering, the pa-
gan gods designed him,

But lost some ancient loveliness
and let the light grow dim—

And yet I catch that old mood, and
grieving for his blindness,

I fare me back to Arcady, just
because of him!

DELHI

*“Red are the lips of the courtesan
smiling,
Black is her heart as the tint of
her hair;
Faithful, beware. . .
Dawn puts an end to her hour of
beguiling:
Haste ye to prayer!”*

Show me thy face, the bruised
breast in these wrappings;
Now we are here on the darken-
ing roof,
Of beauty give proof
To him who hath bought thee away
from thy trappings
And set thee aloof.

Dost miss the gold bells from thine
ankles, O Dancer,
Dost pine for the gayest bazaar
in the Square?

Let down thy dark hair,
And see if the stars will not give
me mine answer:
Child, art thou fair?

So spent . . . when the night hath
had scarce its beginning?
What of thy pallor when morn-
ing shall break?
What odds does it make. . .
Many there are who have played
for my winning
When love was the stake.

*"Red are the lips of the courtesan
smiling,
Black is her heart as the tint of
her hair;
Faithful, beware. . .
Dawn puts an end to her hour of
beguiling:
Haste ye to prayer!"*

LULLABY

J. G. H.

The mother-bird croons to her
babies:

How safe is the nest in the tree!
It swings as she sings to the tender
brown things
That nestle and crowd in the
warmth of her wings . . .
(*So nestle, my darling, to me.*)

The mother-bird fears for her ba-
bies:

Their weeks in the tree-top are
few.
What way can she say that she
wants them to stay,
How keep them from falling or
flying away?
(*O, darling . . . I'm fearing for
you.*)

The mother-bird grieves for her
babies:

So empty and still is the nest!
I see in the tree what my own nest
will be

When you have grown strong and
have no need of me . . .

*(But hush you, my darling, and
rest.)*

O CHRIST, WHO LAY IN MARY'S ARMS

O Christ, Who lay in Mary's arms,
Whose face against her face was
pressed,
My arms have burden light for
Thee,
Would lay it on Thy pitying
breast.

Look, Thou: these little quiet
hands,
These baby-eyes that could not
see;
Wilt warm his heart against Thy
heart,
And hold his frailty close to
Thee?

Wilt kiss the lips that could not
know
His mother's lips that breathe
this prayer?—
O take this lost lamb to Thy fold,
And give it, Christ, a shepherd's
care!

TO A CHILD

A dream is just a little boat whose
sails are made of sleep ;
Oh, safely may yours ever float up-
on the starry deep,
And (though it drift far out to sea)
Come home to me!

A dream is just a butterfly above a
poppy-ring ;
Oh, may yours never flutter by
with bruises on its wing,
But rest upon some slender stalk
Near where I walk!

A dream is just a climbing rose
against a sanded wall ;
Oh, may yours glad the garden-
close before its petals fall,
And, to my lips on your pink cheek,
Its sweetness speak! . . .

* * *

My boat it sailed and lost its way,
with none to see it pass;
My rose was faded in a day and
scattered on the grass . . .
One winged thing glints the twi-
light-blue:
My hope for You!

THE WIND ON THE HILL- TOP

The wind on the hill-top bruiseeth
and bendeth the young trees
over;

The old trees stand.

So Love kisseth thee on the mouth,
O Maiden, and layeth his hand
But light on my year-limned brow,
and must powerless pass me by.

The wind on the hill-top bruiseeth
and bendeth the young trees
over—

*Yet the trees strong-standing are
they that quiver and sigh!*

FOR A 'CELLO MELODY

Life's a road that has no turning:
Ah, how steep!

By the wayside Love's an altar:
Pray—and weep. . .

*(But the dust from incense-burn-
ing, none shall keep.)*

God, your weariness discerning,
Broken hope and silent yearning,
Gives as treasure of your earning,
Sleep:

*Gives as measure of your earning,
only Sleep.*

AT THE OLD LADIES' HOME

There in a row of chairs upon the
porch

I saw them, women alien from the
world,

Set in a niche to watch the world
go by:

A few, born saints . . . but some had
outworn sin;

Sisters at last, from having done
with life.

Here Joan of Arc, grown past
her soldier-dream,

And Mariamne, spared her Her-
od's wrath,

Forgetting Herod, gossiped for an
hour;

While calm Francesca, once know-
ing Paolo's love,

Sat knitting peaceful in the noon-
day sun,

And Nicolette, with Aucassin long
gone,
Made painful writing with a
wrinkled hand.

“Ah, let me die,” I prayed, “be-
fore the glow
Shall leave my body, and before
my tears
Shall buy me patience; take me
while I feel
The lure-of-things that blesses with
its hurt—
Dear God, give me not age!” (For
I would keep
You in my heart of hearts . . . for
whose sad eyes
These lines are set, O Dearest . . .
to the last.)

Just then, among the many faces
there,
I glimpsed a face most delicate and
pale
And very lovely with that wistful-
ness
In which the shadows of long sor-
row lie;

Meeting my look, she smiled, and,
 with that smile,
Somehow the lilacs by the iron
 fence,
The plumed grass brushing low
 across the path,
Brought back to me an afternoon
 in May
And a sweet garden where I some-
 times played
When I fared forth in gingham
 pinafore:
I saw Another (dead so many
 years,
Her name I could not in that hour
 recall) :
Old she had been as ashes in a jar
She kept upon a high, old-fashion-
 ed chest
In an old-fashioned room in her
 still house . . .
Now I remembered with what pas-
 sionate warmth
A cheek had once been pressed
 against my cheek,
What frail and trembling arms had
 lifted me

To touch that silvery dust within
the jar.

Perhaps it is God's will I shall
grow old

And none may read beneath my
quietness . . .

Gardens in May, or any memory
Of you! And yet for very shame
tonight

I change my prayer, and ask for
strength to live.

ARGENTEUIL

Heloise speaks:

I saw a vestal sunset—'twas the
hour

That marked my travail there in
Brittany:

So calm, so holy, like a sign from
God

That all my stain was washed away;
and I

With this full woman's-heart with-
in my breast

Was comforted as is a little child,
Smiled at . . . forgiven its brief
trespasses.

Then died that splendor . . . cold
the sky, and far:

Wrapt in the world's long shadow,
the pure glow

Faded before mine eyes.

O Abelard,

So fades Repentance, wrapt in
Memory!

This time is God's, this place, all
else is thine . . .

Thine, for no prayer can shut these
eyes to truth,

No penance blot out sin like mine
with thee.

Here in these vigils on my tortured
knees,

I cry, "Make clean . . . give me
again a sign" . . .

Yet—for my praying lips I crave
thy kiss,

The thrill of thee for mine uplift-
ed arms.

A PERSIAN GRAVE

At Naishapur in Khorassan
The drifting rose-leaves lightly fall
Across the gray old garden-wall
That marks the spot where you began

To speculate, quite unafraid —
Those Persian roses, how they fade!

You laughed — 'twas where today
you lie:

Ah, there was One who laughed
beside,

And brought to you the world-old
lure,

The while the roses bloomed and
died

Where now the roses bloom and die
At Naishapur.

At Naishapur in Khorassan
The glow of life is in the vine:

Plenty there are to sing of wine;
Poets to ponder o'er the Plan,
And hearts to feel the ancient fire...
Though none has found that
'Heart's-Desire.'

You sang—'twas where today you
sleep—
Where sleeps that One whose soul
you thrilled?
Say, friend, does Time make
dreaming sure?
As over your grave the cup is filled,
Do roses and wine old sweetness
keep
At Naishapur?

SALUTE!

(Paul Verlaine to Aubrey
Beardsley)

Walking alone upon the edge of
Sleep,
I found the path a puzzling one
and steep:
Now thou art come—O Brother,
lift thine eyes
And say what seems it . . . hell or
paradise?
(*Which hath a blood-red twilight
and a black moonrise?*)

AT BENI-MORA

And once, dear heart, I prayed to
miss the lot
That comes of loving and of lov-
er's loss;
Yea, helpless, begged of Life to
stretch me not
Upon the cross.
It is Life's will that sacrifice be
mine;
And, scourged, I wear the thorns.
Write thou the sign.

FOR THE FLY-LEAF OF A
VOLUME OF KEATS

"The day is gone, and all its sweets
are gone" —

The long night stilled the hunger
on thy lips.

Too late was Fame, with healing
finger-tips

To smooth thy brow; but in another
dawn

She found thee, dear, who lay so
spent and wan:

Knelt there and kissed thee, dropping
penitent tears,

And breathed her vow to love thee
through the years.

"The day is gone, and all its sweets
are gone" —

Ah, couldst thou know the darkness
was withdrawn!

FRAGMENT

If Passion's fitful days were sweet
to you,

I pray you keep their sweetness
in your heart,

And dream awhile of joys when
life was new . . .

Forgetting me, who played the
later part.

(I sometimes think God might
have come my way,

Had there been aught in you to
bid Him stay.)

SAVE IN HIS OWN COUNTRY

They spoke of "Failure," when the
 bravest of their kind
 First shook the country dust
 from his young feet—
And then of "Failure," when in
 years his path did wind
Back to their paths; nor knew that
 Fame could find
 Its old ways sweet!

FIAT LUX

It seemed to us that o'er mute, un-
seen strings
He drew his fingers, worn and
coarse with toil;
That he who knew Life's meagre-
ness and soil
In his last hour transcended com-
mon things.
Sometimes, they say, the dying im-
pulse brings
That harper's-motion to rude fin-
ger-tips,
Lays a warm smile across the cold-
est lips,
Frees from the voiceless clay a soul
that sings.

'Twas so with him. We knew the
labored speech,
The heavy step, the sordid, care-
filled days;

Love, music, laughter, deemed be-
yond his reach,
Nor guessed the hurt beneath his
uncouth ways . . .
Till at the last Death changed the
sullen guise,
Gave him a harper's touch . . . a
poet's eyes.

THE GYPSY STARS ARE CAMPED

The gypsy stars are camped around
the moon —

That nomads'-fire along the road
of Night —

And resting there before they take
their flight,

What lullabies the older stars must
croon:

Songs of the byways where with si-
lent shoon

Age-long they wander; where at
early light

Their caravan slips quietly from
sight . . .

And hides its trail across the sky at
noon.

That secret trail! To think where
it began

Or how it ends? . . . when myriad
moon-fires glow

In camps at even where God's
highroads be?
When tribes of stars, unguessed,
undreamed by man,
Too far for these the earth-seen
stars to go,
Find trail on trail . . . to deeper
mystery?

SURRENDER

Young and trusting, blithe and fair,
I was the maid he took to wife . . .
But bruises on my heart I wear,
Who wedded Life.

So reach thy lover's-arms to me—
Burn thou my lips with eager
breath:
Once will I share thine ecstasy
With thee, O Death!

AFTERWARD

I did not know how short your day
would be!

I had you safe. My words could
wait awhile.

And yet . . . your eyes begged ten-
derness of me

Behind their smile.

And now for you, so dark, so long,
is night.

I speak, but on my knees, un-
heard, alone—

What words were these to make a
short day bright . . .

If I had known!

I SEE'D YE AINCE

I see'd ye aince on maurket-day:
Sae bonnie was your smile,
I gaed (tae pass ye on the brae)
Oot o' ma road a mile.

Your een was een that wadna see,
But, man, ye steppit braw,
An' O, ye was the lad for me . . .
Wha cam an' gaed awa'.

Ah, dearie, sic a load is love!
Wi' me ye had nae pairt;
But ither maurket-days juist prove
The breakin' o' ma hairt.

Your een was een that wadna see,
But licht tae mine they lent . . .
An' O, ye was the lad for me,
If ye had only kent!

“I HEARD HER WHISPER”

I heard her whisper soft my name,
a dream or two ago:
She strayed adown Sleep's quiet
path,
And oh, the lure her nearness
hath . . .
Do I not know?

I felt her kiss, light on my brow; I
woke and she was gone—
Dear God, to know which pitying
star
Points where the mist-hung mead-
ows are
That lie beyond the dawn!

SANCTUARY

If I could come to you one holy
hour
And lay this weary head upon your
breast,
Or wear unseen against my heart a
flower
That your warm fingers had but
lately pressed,
God knows . . . to me might come a
dreamed-of rest:
As, at the close, one lies amid the
bloom,
So my scarred soul, in last white
garments dressed,
Beneath pale tapers lighting all the
gloom
Might lie in quiet in a hallowed
Inner Room.

WHEN I AM DEAD

When I am dead, how will you
watch

Alone the sunset-light,
Or heed the shining galleons' drift
Across the path of night?

What ships that brought our car-
goes in

Must pass the harbor by,
Toward me what stars be outward
bound

Down sea-lanes of the sky?

When I am dead, how will you
meet

The gladness of a dawn
Come back to you from out the
dark

Where love and I are gone?

AGAIN IS IT APRIL

Buds on the willow and sap in the
alder,

And hearts to their tryst at the
close of the day:

'Twas long-ago April when love
and I called Her,

Kissed in the shadows — and
went on our way.

Kissed in the shadows! . . . the
thought of it follows

The track of the years, and it
lightens their load:

Sweet as the breath of those fern-
spicy hollows,

Youth and maid meeting at bend
of the road.

Again is it April, though April be
over;

O, where do the ghosts of the
dead Aprils go?

In spring-time the years find me
always a lover—
(And where She is waiting,
anemones blow.)

Buds on the willow and sap in the
alder,
And hearts to their tryst at the
close of the day:
'Twas long-ago April when love
and I called Her,
Kissed in the shadows—and
went on our way.

VIGNETTE

(E. L.)

The old, old man from the Rescue Mission, come to sell me three bags of wood,

Leaned his arms on the wide stone railing: "I'd like to rest, if you'd say I could."

His dirty hands were long and slender; the bridge of his nose was fine and high;

His shaky voice held a rare, strange echo out of life that had passed him by.

"Take a chair in the sun," I answered — and saw the bruise above one eye.

He asked for the piece of the morning paper that lay, all wrinkled, beneath my feet;

He took from his pocket some ten-

cent glasses (tied with a string
that was far from neat!)
The smell of whiskey was faint,
but certain. I looked again at
that regal head,
And thought of the men of gentle
breeding, the women who made
him, long-time dead:
“God knows the story that lies be-
hind him, the grave that waits
him,” my pity said.

I stood in silence; we spoke no
further till ribald urchins called
out in glee,
“*Look-a the Wood-man, the crazy
Wood-man!*” . . . He flushed and
turned his face to me:
“Boys will be boys . . . perhaps
these mothers would feel like
mine, who rebuked me when
I mocked the tune of a strolling
fiddler . . . I think I was not
much over ten,
But I remembered, through much
forgetting, and never could give
such hurt again. . .”

The old, old man from the Rescue
Mission, come to sell me three
bags of wood,
Shuffled away in the pavement-
shadows. The wares I purchas-
ed were none too good —
But his dirty hands were long and
slender; the bridge of his nose
was fine and high;
His shaky voice held a rare, strange
echo out of a life that had passed
him by. . .
(But what can you do when they
smell of whiskey, and have a
bruise above one eye?)

DAFFODILS

There flames the first gay daffodil
Where winter-long the snows have
lain:

Who buried Love, all spent and
still?

There flames the first gay daffodil.
Go, Love's alive on yonder hill,
And yours for asking, joy and pain.
There flames the first gay daffodil
Where winter-long the snows have
lain!

TRIOLET

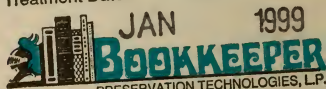
Deep in the heart of me,
Nothing but You!
See through the art of me —
Deep in the heart of me,
Find the best part of me,
Changeless and true.
Deep in the heart of me,
Nothing but You!

A LARK WENT SINGING

A lark went singing in the morn-
ing glow —
And I remembered that you could
not know;
And that the songs my heart had
made for you
Must sing themselves to silence in
the blue.

But in the sunset-hush there came
again
A clear, brave note . . . and
Something whispered then:
“He hears no answer, but the
weary lark
Still sings, and lifts the song to
meet the dark.”

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